

To: State Board of Education

School Libraries are not what they were and are more vital than ever. I make that statement as one who has been a school librarian for over 30 years, and author of fifteen books for school librarians, an adjunct at William Paterson University, and the recipient of the 2016 American Association of School Librarians' Distinguished Service Award.

The difficulty in recognizing the critical role school librarians have in student learning and achievement lies in the multiplicity of roles librarians play in achieving this end. Here are some roles they play and what they teach:

- Technology integrator: School librarians are current with the latest web resources and apps and work with teachers to integrate them into the curriculum.
- Lifelong reading: While students learn how to read in the class, it is the librarian who guides them into the love of reading.
- Digital literacy: The librarian teaches students to identify "fake news," stay safe in cyberspace, respect copyright and use information ethically. It also encompasses learning to engage respectfully with people who hold different beliefs and develop a global awareness of people and culture.
- Curator: The librarian develops a collection of materials in appropriate formats that are integrated with the curriculum and allow students and faculty to pursue their academic needs and personal interests.
- Inquiry-based learning: The librarian, often in collaboration with teachers, guides students to explore curriculum-based topics, develop solutions to real-world problems and issues, and create new knowledge.

Google is a wonderful search tool. It is not good for research, and students need to learn the difference. As the number of school librarians (and libraries) have been eliminated students are not learning these vital skills.

On a personal level, I can share with you that my son who teaches at Monmouth University in the School of Nursing finds too many of his students do not know how to do research. This is a sorry state of affairs. We need our school librarians who are supported by a budget that allows them to prepare students for college, career, and life.

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